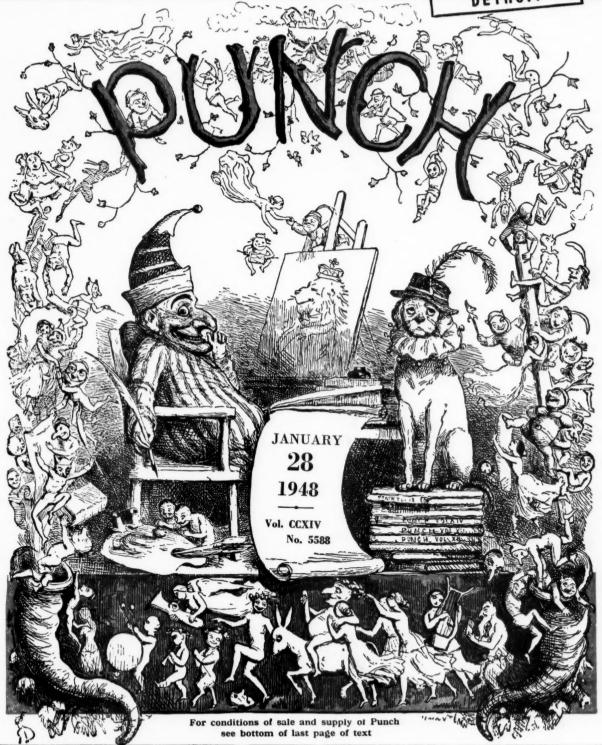
CADBURYS MILD DESSERT

CHOCLOLA TE

RETRAIT



ALL CLASSES OF INSURANCE TRANSACTED

CAR & GENERAL

INSURANCE

LTD.

83, PALL MALL, LONDON, S.W.1.

DUNLOPILLO

The original

LATEX FOAM MATTRESS



When can I get one?

The supply of Dunlopillo Mattresses is at present limited to invalids who need the extra comfort that Dunlopillo provides—and can produce a doctor's certificate to that effect. Even then, heavy demands cause some delay in delivery. We regret that others must still wait awhile for the best.







Dunlopillo Mattresses for domestic use are sold only through retail furnishing houses.

47D/D4A

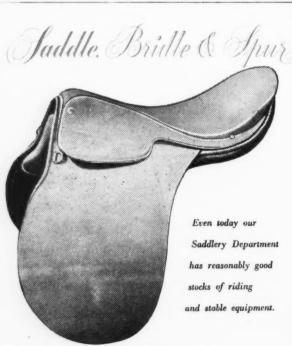


Other pleasures pall beside a pipe of Murray's Mellow Mixture. It's a grand tobacco of medium strength—the strength most men prefer. Cool, fragrant, comforting, with a flavour all its own. Above all, it burns slowly. So Murray's lasts longer and that is important these days!



MURRAY'S MELLOW MIXTURE 3/11 an oz.

MURRAY, SONS & CO. LTD., BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND where good tobaccos have been skilfully blended for over 130 years



MOSS BROS

Junction of Garrick & Bedford Streets, W.C.2

Temple Bar 4477

Aldershot Bournemouth Bristol Camberley Manchester Portsmouth York



Leader over the Atlantic

- the Constellation



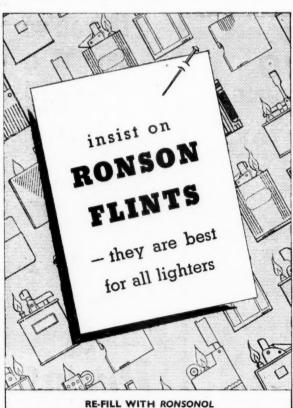
FLYING THE ATLANTIC is the supreme test of airliner efficiency and dependability. At the close of 1947, Constellations were flying more round trips weekly than any other scheduled transport.

THE PROOF IS IN THE FLYING. Behind Constellations lie over 1,000 million passenger miles of commercial service, thousands of hours of operational experience for pilots and ground personnel. Thus, already the most thoroughly proven modern air transport, the *new-type* Constellation is now more than ever "the world's most modern airliner".

Lockheed Constellation now-more than ever-WORLD LEADER

LOOK TO LOCKHEED FOR LEADERSHIP

D/7



RE-FILL WITH RONSONOL
THE WORLD'S GREATEST LIGHTER FUEL

To those who appreciate



a finer KUMMEL



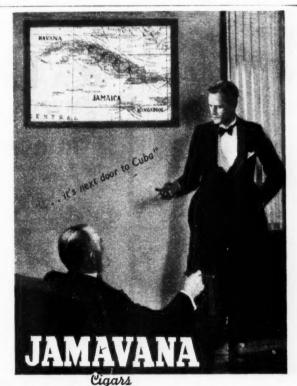
BOLSKUMMEL

— the original Dutch Kummel has at last returned. Double distilled from pure grain spirit and genuine Dutch caraway seed, BOLSKUMMEL owes its supremacy to the secret formula of Lucas Bols, who founded the firm in 1575. Its heritage helps to make it the healthiest of all liqueurs. Don't say Kummel — say BOLS-

BOLSKUMMEL

VERY DRY TO SUIT THE ENGLISH PALATE

Sole Importers : Brown, Gore & Welch Limited.



Rolled in Jamaica from finest leaf CORONA GRANDES CORONAS PETIT CORONAS 122/11 97/11 83/4 per 25 per 25

JAMAYANA CIGARS 84 PICCADILLY LONDON WI



Little time to think about correct posture, even when you do get a chance to sit down! Result stomach muscles soft, slack and no longer a protection. A Linia Belt gives just the support you need. It tones up the muscles and helps a lot in keeping you fit and

LINIA BELT

Price including the Linia Joch Strap from £4.13.4 and 3 coupons Linia Method Booklet free. SOLD ONLY BY

J. ROUSSEL LTD

REGENT STREET, LONDON, W.I

Phone: REGent 7570 & at Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, etc.



Superbly styled in self-sealing VENTILE, the ideal waterproof fabric. The ADASTRA Long Golfer, gives much needed additional protection against wind and rain and the rub of the bag. It is surprisingly warm for so light a garment.





SERVICE **PURCHASE TAX**

..............

We regret to have to announce that, as from January 1st 1948 the charge for the Biro Refill Service must be increased to 5/8d. (including 1/5d. Purchase Tax).

This increase is due to the fact that H.M. Customs and Excise have decided this service must now bear Purchase Tax. This decision revokes a previous ruling of over two years' standing under which the Biro Refill Service was classed as a Service and therefore exempt from this impost.

Fortunately the introduction of the new type Biro Refill has enabled us to take time by the forelock and absorb a portion of the tax.

We are delighted to be in a position thus to relieve the public from the full weight

the versatile instrument

A MILES-MARTIN PEN COMPANY PRODUCT



Those were the days,



AND THIS WAS THE SHOE CREAM and still is! PROPERT'S SHOE CREAM

If you've caught a Cold

You can help yourself most effectively by taking Phensic—if you've caught a cold or chill. Because Phensic Tableta rapidly disintegrate they are promptly absorbed—thus the beneficial effect is felt very quickly. Symptoms such as a stuffy nose, running eyes, shivering, a heavy head are greatly relieved—and it is no uncommon thing for Phensic to break up a severe cold in a matter of hours. So get a supply of Phensic now



The grand tonic

pain-relieving tablet!



SINGER MOTORS

SINGER MOTORS LIMITED . BIRMINGHAM AND COVENTRY

The Singer Super-Twelve, a full fiveseater with generous luggage room, is now in production. In comfort and finish,performanceandworkmanship, this is a car above and ahead of today's accepted standards.



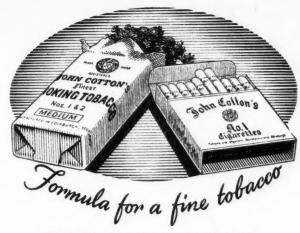
Hotels and canteens supplied with Calgonite for their dishwashing machines are assured of reliable help in the kitchen. Calgonite contains Calgon which dissolves lime scum and makes a clean and simple job of washing up, especially when the water is hard.

ALBRIGHT & WILSON



CALGON (Sodium Metaphosphate) · CALGONITE

TRW II



TAKE the choicest leaf; let it be blended by methods truly tested over 177 years of experience; exclude all artificial flavouring...and there you have a fragrant tobacco for pipe or cigarette such as makes other men say 'Ah, John Cotton—lucky fellow!'

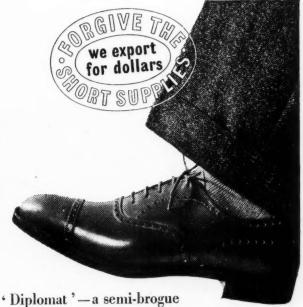
★ John Cotton Tobacco Nos. 1 & 2 - 4/6 an oz.
No. 4 - 4/2 an oz.
Empire - 3/11 an oz.
★ No. 1 Cigarettes - - 3/8 for 20

JOHN COTTON

A Trusted Tobacco-a Perfect Cigarette

MADE IN EDINBURGH SINCE 1770





for town and country. Good leather...

. . a famous last . . fine craftsmanship . . characteristics of

. . Characteristics of

Church's famous English shoes

made by Church's of Northampton

SPORTS CLASSICS



Sportswomen, these shirts give you the advantage of complete action comfort! They are coupon-saving too. Made of various reliable and attractive fabrics. Featuring the patented spare collar. Open or closed neckline. At leading Fashion Houses and Stores.

SHIRT BLOUSE with patented Spare Collar

THE WAKEFIELD SHIRT CO. LTD. (Dept. 4), 126, Kirkgate, Wakefield, Yorks.

"Such a HEAVENLY flavour"

> There is no better coffee obtainable

"FIFTH AVENUE" **PURE COFFEE**

VACUUM PACKED Obtainable at High-class

Grocers & Stores Price I/8d. per 1-lb. tin

NEWBALL & MASON LIMITED **NOTTINGHAM**

HC97

whispered ..

AT THE FOLIES BERGÈRE

"If you study her closely, ma chere, you will see that all her charm is in her eyes...And her eyes-what would they be but for that clever mascara she uses! It comes from Pinaud...Mascara "612" it is called...I use it myself." And in London as in Paris, women who realise the value of lovelier eyes wisely include mascara by Pinaud in their make-up.



PINAUD to the original Paris formula.

TRADE MARK



Maconochie'

Superb Soups

In the home for a LIFETIME Heat-controlled Electric Iron with Plated Aluminium Soleplate.



ALUMINIUM DOMESTI Identified by the Quality

BULPITT & SONS LTD., ST. GEORGE'S WORKS, ICKNIELD ST., B'HAM 18



Raise the patient's metabolic rate and you quicken recovery

WHEN we are recovering from illness,

W our vitality is at a low ebb.

This is because our *metabolic rate* is depressed. (Metabolism is the chemical process in the body-cells which maintains life by the breakdown and building-up of the products of digestion.) If metabolism can be stimulated, listlessness disappears. We can take on new strength and soon "turn the corner."

Light broths and meat extracts will often do this. But scientific tests have proved Brand's Essence, which contains 10% of meat protein, outstanding in quickening metabolism. A few spoonfuls of Brand's Essence will

stimulate a convalescent patient's appetite and quicken the metabolic rate so that the first step is made towards recovery. 3/- a jar.



Brand's Essence

(OF MEAT)



Nothing seems impossible when your

energy springs

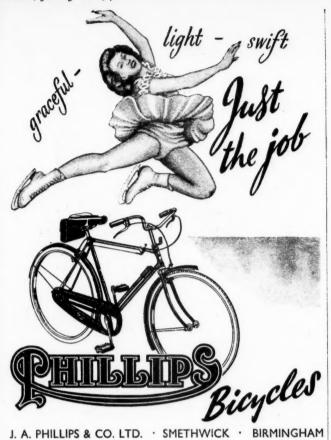
crumbs, dust, grit & litter quickly, easily and quietly with the





SWEEPER

Although supplies are still very limited, you'll be thankful you waited for a Ewbank!





For water heating—GAS

When Mr. Therm turns coal into gas and coke the greatest amount of heat is extracted from it, and valuable by-products, such as tar and ammonia, are saved for making Dyes, Aspirin, M & B, Plastics, Perfumes, Nylons, and thousands of other useful things.

BRITISH GAS COUNCIL . I GROSVENOR PLACE . LONDON SWI



WHAT THE

GUARANTEED 100% NON-SLIP

Furmoto shines floors like glass—produces a hard, tread-proof and waterproof surface on any kind of flooring and linoleum—yet on it you can't slip an inch. Because of this it is the only polish you should use. Avoid accident claims as result of anyone falling on slippery floors. You are absolutely safe with Furmoto, for with every tin is given

£100 FREE INSURANCE AGAINST SLIPPING.

Sold in tins, 1/6, 3/-, 5/- and larger sizes at Oilshops, Grocers, Ironmongers,
Stores, etc.

Furmoto non-slip

Awarded 64 Gold Medals.

In cases of difficulty write for name of nearest stockiet to:
FURMOTO CHEMICAL CO., I-3, Brixton Road, London, S.W. 9

To preserve your shoes. Polish them with SOLITAIRE Shoe Polish de Luxe



. . . and, of course, the secret's a J. Foundation
Corsets, girdles, co-selectes and brassieres.

She might have been the happiest woman in the world, but . . .

"... darling, you look tired" HE SAID



A few kind words, affectionately spoken . . . and suddenly the spell of the evening is shattered. For what else is a tired look but an old look? Skin Deep, used faithfully as a foundation by day and as a skin food at night, prevents your complexion looking jaded. A skilful blend of oils closely resembling the complexion's natural oils, it does your skin good all the time.

Skin Deep
BEAUTY CREAM

FOR DAY AND NIGHT USE

ATKINSONS OF OLD BOND STREET, W.1

AGD. 19-1099



PERIVALE . GREENFORD . MIDDLESES



Whenever an important industrial need arises, British Celanese Limited directs its research skill towards meeting that need. Celanese Scientists can see the almost unlimited potentialities of products of creative chemistry. They can see products that are poles apart in texture, form and application . . . machine belting and curtain ninon . . . tow ropes and georgette . . . plastic machine-guards and transparent packaging. They can assess their strength, visualise their beauty, for they themselves have predetermined these things in their original chemical formulæ.

British Celanese Limited

TEXTILES . PLASTICS . CHEMICALS





Vol. CCXIV No. 5588



Or

The London Charivari



January 28 1948

Charivaria

Service after sales has always been the policy of the British motor industry. Most dealers agree that the cost of jacking-up should be included in the purchase price.

0 0

Two Cabinet Ministers have stated that they like Dick Barton. Could this explain how he gets all that petrol?

A reporter comments on the extraordinary number of political jokes in this year's pantomimes. It is sad to think that theatre performances are descending to the level of parliamentary debates.

0 0

A well-known artist has shaved off his beard. In Chelsea this is regarded as a sign of a mild winter.

0 0

Charges for electricity in the home may be increased. This means that domestic consumers will save more money during fuel cuts.

Patience Rewarded

"Mr. —, returning thanks, assured the magistrates that the gift had come as a complete surprise. He started at the Lewes Court as a boy in 1927 and since then he had received nothing but kindness."—"Sussex Express."

. .

A new variety of tomato is easily peeled without being dropped into hot water. This will be quite a blow to cookery-hint writers.

British housewives will soon be able to buy papaya juice, which makes tough meat tender. Too much of it, however, can take the stuffing out of crockery.

Some Americans are pretending to find a subtle association between American aid and American succour.

0 0

"CINEMAS
Seats may go up"
"Daily Mail" headlines.
Including the organist's.

0 0

A writer suggests that present acute shortages are forcing the most respectable of Englishmen to resort to black-market dealings. In other words, the straight bat is being forsaken in favour of the crooked racket.

0 0

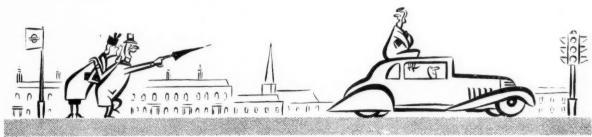
It is reported that armed thieves swooped on a rival gang at a card-party. But all they got was five aces.

Real Salesmanship

"The United Kingdom has a favourable balance of trade with Switzerland. We are selling her nearly three times as much as she is buying from us."—Daily paper.

0 0

"I see nothing at all to prevent a person running a car for pleasure with a gas-bag on the roof," says a motoring correspondent. At least it's a change from having her in the back seat.



Headmasters and Hereford

HE Headmaster walked round and round the room in exact circles. He was obliged to walk round and round, if he walked at all, because the room was built in an old turret and the desks were ranged along the sides under the lozenge-paned windows.

The Headmaster was a portly man with a beard. One of the things which fascinated his form was his habit of planting one foot precisely in front of the other when he walked, as Red Indians are supposed to do on the hunting

trail.

It was a hot summer morning and a Red Admiral drifted in through one of the windows, fluttered and settled on the floor. Now and then it crawled a few inches and was still again.

The probable fate of the butterfly became at once a matter of urgent interest to the form. On any circuit it

might escape or it might die.

It occurred to somebody that to flick paper pellets at the Red Admiral behind the Headmaster's back would

heighten the fear and pity of the drama.

Very soon the floor was littered with paper pellets. The Red Admiral survived, the Headmaster circumambulated, construing continued. The long hour wore on. The interest of the Headmaster was, as usual, confined to his own ideas of eloquent translation, to the syntax of sentences, and to the Lays of Ancient Rome.

Any place-name in the Æneid caused the Headmaster

Any place-name in the Æneid caused the Headmaster to demand a quotation from the Lays of Ancient Rome, and it was the habit of the form, though most of them knew the lines by heart, to begin by quoting them wrong so that the Headmaster might be worked up gradually from chagrin to tolerance, and finally to enthusiastic delight, when the proper answer came.

Now and then he ran his fingers through his beard, and this operation also caused great pleasure, because it was well known that he wore no tie underneath his beard.

The Red Admiral remained unobliterated. The Æneid, accompanied by Lord Macaulay, rolled on and on. Someone pulled out half-a-crown and made a silent wager that the butterfly would be killed before the end, turning his thumb downwards as the Roman emperors were supposed to do when a gladiator had fallen in the sand. The bet was taken. The pellets continued to drop about the butterfly. The feet continued to miss it by inches, as they passed ponderously by. The lesson ended. As the last boy left the room the Headmaster said "Put that butterfly out of the window." He did not seem to notice the paper on the floor. Nobody even knew how much of the contest in the arena he had observed.

I remembered all this when I had read the letters to the Press that were written about the qualifications of headmasters of Public Schools. I do not know whether this Headmaster was a great teacher or a great administrator. I know that he was earnest, autocratic and irascible. I know that he preached in chapel with some fervour. I know that he wrote a hymn about Judas Iscariot, a character usually neglected by hymnologists. It began:

"Hushed are the traitor lips Silent the heart forsworn,"

lines in which the influence of Lord Macaulay is again clearly visible. I do not know whether he would have made a good solicitor. I know that he became a bishop beyond the Cymric pale. And I know that his predecessor also became a bishop—of Hereford. It was always said that he rode about his diocese in episcopal clothing, which is of course peculiarly well-adapted for the purpose.

And this, by a gentle transition which the reader can hardly fail to admire, enables me to pass on to another controversy which has vexed the readers of *The Times*, the monstrous proposition that the county of Herefordshire should be absorbed by its neighbour to the east.

Was it for this, one may ask, that Offa made his Dyke against the Welsh, that Harold built his castles, and William Langland, the great Herefordshire poet, sang?

The precise quality of William Langland's voice, let it be admitted, is probably not known. The full title of his poem, usually called "Piers the Plowman," is stated by my encyclopædia to be The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman, together with Vita de Do-wel, Do-bet et Do-best, secundum Wit et Resoun; this is a bad title for a song, but it should not blind us to the splendours of Herefordshire, its castles, the beauty of its scenery, its houses and hops and orchards, its hills and streams, its red loam, its cattle and its grain, and above all its immemorial independence and antiquity.

In this county Fair Rosamund lived, and in this county Nell Gwynn was born. And so was Dick Whittington.

These names, you may argue, have not much relevance to the duties of a modern County Council? Then let me add David Garrick, and the Earl of Essex, whom Queen Elizabeth so wrongly betrayed, and the fact that I am myself a ratepayer, and would not pay my rates to Worcestershire for all the waters of the Wye.

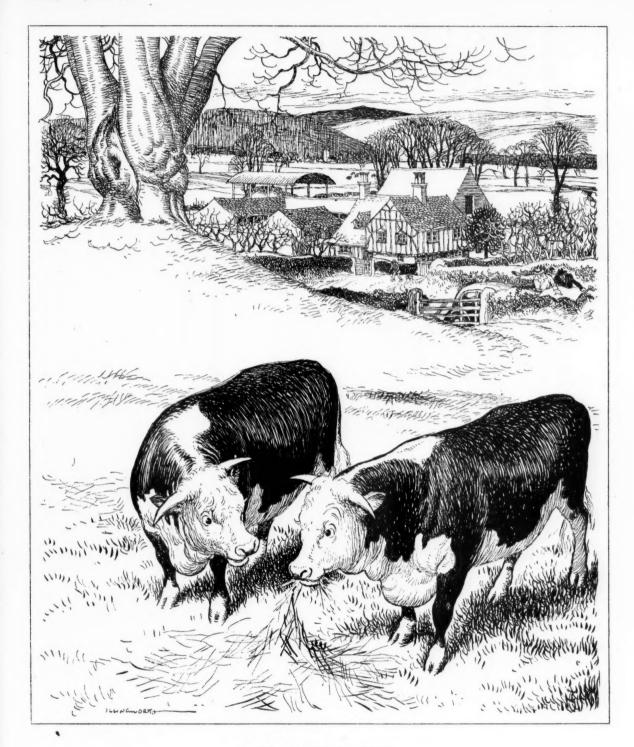
And if that does not convince you of the sturdy, rugged nature of this most glorious of our counties, let me quote for you part of the speech made by Thomas Lord Coningsby to the Mayor and Council of Hereford in 1718.

This nobleman was Lord-Lieutenant of Herefordshire, and though his family during the civil war had been strong partisans of the Stuarts, he chose to take the opposite side and give his support to the Hanoverian dynasty. He said:

"Mr. Mayor, your servant; gentlemen, yours: * * * * ye all; I'll have you to know * * * * that I am your lordlieutenant, custos rotulorum of this County, and lord high steward of this city; and * * * * ye, I'll do what I please with you and your city. I hear that some of you are for the Pretender, a fellow * * * * whom his mother disowned . . . I am also informed that a pack of worthless wretches, one of 'em which was an exciseman, and another which eats the King's bread, met in the market house upon the tenth of June and drank the Pretender's health, and proclaimed him King. I hear you had oaken boughs and white roses also, *** ye. There are but three honest men in your town * * * * which (to their honour be it spoken) are Tom Bayley, Dr. Lewis and Sam Birch. As for myself, I have opposed this fellow the Pretender's father, I've opposed the son, and, though King George be the best prince that ever sat upon the throne, * * * * ye, but I'll oppose him too, if he should pretend to alter our laws and constitution."

The rhythm of this fine speech is slightly marred by the necessity under which I labour of leaving out some of the most important words, but the sense remains fairly clear; make no doubt of it, this man was an administrator, and while such a spirit lingers, as I think it must linger in Herefordshire, it will not be incorporated in Worcestershire or any other county until as many gallant men have fallen in battle as were slain at Mortimer's Cross, where the ghosts of knights in armour are still sometimes seen, and my motorcar collided with a bullock as late as 1933. Evoe.

From "The Ancient Customs of the City of Hereford," by Richard Johnson, Town Clerk, printed in 1868.



THE CATTLE CRISIS

"Are we to become Worcesters?"

[The Local Government Boundary Commission has proposed the merging of a large part of Herefordshire in Worcestershire.]



". . . But we must be fair, Doctor-you have my rheumatism, so I've given my lumbago to Dr. Jarvis."

News of Boathanger

HE last time I wrote about Boathanger in these pages was just under seven years ago; I had been reminded of him, no more. I feared I might be going to meet him and that he would ask me to lend him a pound. But I didn't meet him, then or later, and as it's now nearly twenty years since he saw me there's a good chance that he might think twice before borrowing anything. Besides, my resistance has increased; I am used to more professional spongers than Boathanger, who never paid anything back, but always (I believe) meant to. Now, by all accounts, he might even do it.

The fact seems to be that Boathanger has come into money. I don't know any details; just that he's come into money and thrown up his job. I have been collating three or four different versions of the story.

He went to the manager, it seems (he was some kind of clerk behind the scenes of a big department store), and said he wanted to leave to shoot elk.

The manager wasn't listening much. He didn't look up from his papers for some two minutes, then he raised his head sharply and said "Yes? Is it that lot of surplus canary-oh, Boathanger. Well? You wanted to see me?"

"I wish to leave," Boathanger said flatly again, "to shoot elk."

"To-"To shoot elk."

Silence for a bit, while the manager stared. He couldn't decide, it is supposed, whether to believe he had misheard or that Boathanger was off his head. At length he plunged and said "You'll have to go a long way to find any elk."

Canada," said Boathanger, in an obliging manner. The manager tossed a few papers irritably about his desk and then rasped "You wish for leave of absence? How long? Do you mean to shoot many elk?" He shifted his glasses farther down his nose.

"I shall take 'em as they come," said Boathanger. "But it isn't leave of absence I want. I'm packing it in. I shan't be back.

"Indeed! Thank you for letting me know," said the manager heavily. "And what will you live on?" "Elk," Boathanger replied.

The manager's secretary came in with a red folder and a slip of paper, which she placed before the manager before going out with a glance of curiosity at Boathanger. The manager began to make a vague gesture of appeal to her, but she went out without seeing it.

He looked into the folder, shut it again, and then looked up and said "What is it, Boathanger? You're not happy with us?"

"Show me anybody who's happy in this . . . place," said

Boathanger, holding himself in.

This enraged the manager. "What do you mean?" he cried. "How can you make such a reckless statement as that in this house, where rows of smiling faces are to be seen on every floor?" He was quoting an advertisement. "Pagliacci," said Boathanger.

"I'll thank you to keep a civil tongue in your head," the manager said violently, failing to recognize the allusion. "I tell you our employees are happy! What do you think

we have a Personnel Manager for?

Boathanger said "We've often wondered. Most of us think he has some kind of hold over you and this set-up was arranged so that you could keep an eye on each other.

"Well, I mean, he never does anything, does he? There he sits in that office, doing The Times puzzle and using the telephone to make bets with . . . Come to think of it," said Boathanger, "I dare say he's happy, all right. I never thought of him.'

The manager decided to try a different line. Boathanger," he said in a gentle, reasoning tone, "you of a sporting type. Do you know how to handle a gun?"

"Certainly," said Boathanger, and he went out of the door for a moment and brought in a long brown-paper parcel he had left in a cupboard where the cleaners kept their brooms and pails. "Look," he went on, unwrapping it with a great noise. "I got this from my brother-inlaw's flat this morning-he offered to sell it to me years ago. Beautiful bit of work, isn't it?"

The last of the paper and string fell to the floor and the manager sat there fascinated, looking like a chicken in front of a stoat (except that unless Boathanger's changed a lot in twenty years he bears a rather stronger resemblance to a puffin). He began to say "Have you got a licence——" and then swallowed, looked down, and went on as if preoccupied, "Yes, well, Boathanger, as you are leaving in these circumstances I take it you aren't asking for a reference?"

Boathanger said acidly "What kind of a reference do

you need to shoot elk?

Much of this dialogue was being overheard by way of the manager's desk-microphone, which he had thoughtlessly left switched on, and a certain amount of the action could be seen through glass panels in the walls (in case you had been wondering). Two separate people told me it was as good as the pictures.

Here the secretary, a courageous girl, came in again saying "Er—did you ring, Mr.—oh!" she broke off, doing a double-take and staring at the gun.

"Mr. Boathanger is leaving," said the manager.
"To shoot elk," said Boathanger, retrieving the paper and string and trying to wrap the gun up again.

Then it seems that the secretary, exasperated by his incompetence, began to help him, and the situation collapsed in anticlimax. This is the point about the whole affair that seems to me most characteristic of Boathanger.

What started me inquiring about him at all was that he sent a man I know an elk's tooth the other day, wrapped in a bit of the firm's notepaper. So there may be something in all this; but the post-mark was Swindon (Wilts.).

Song of the Stage-Hands

Y/E work in the wings At various things That nobody sees from the stalls: You don't think of us Unless there's a fuss And bits of the scenery falls. But what would be seen of the old Fairy Queen If the Palace came down on her head? The actors may bark: but if they're in the dark It don't matter what Shakespeare said. It's the same thing wherever you go: The bloke in the front gets the show. But where would he be If it wasn't for we-Working away in the wings?

It looks all serene: You see a new scene-From the Bed-chamber, say, to the Yacht. But you'd change your mind If you came round behind And saw what a job we have got. We lower the mast, but the damn thing sticks fast:

The rigging is foul of the punt.

We push houses round, but we mayn't make a sound, For the hero's proposing in front.

And then, when we change to the Wood, With the moon coming out as it should,

Well, give us a hand, The invisible band,

Working away in the wings.

But still we're all proud We're one of the crowd That's pulling the jolly old strings:

For, bless you, we know

We're as much in the show As the fellow who dances or sings.

We get no bouquets, and they don't wait for days To see us come out of the door.

We can't write a play, but if we go away

There won't be no plays any more!

But there—though we bark we don't bite:

It'll all be all right on the night.

Enjoy yourselves, do: For we'll see you through

Working away in the wings.

A. P. H.

P-O4 and So Forth

ARE for a quicky, sir?" he said, raising his cap and insinuating a chessboard between my lips

and my coffee.

He was obviously a new member. and I felt bound to assent, though I have retired from active chess. In my day I had a subtle turn of the wrist that was considered practically unplayable, but I confine myself now to helpful asides on the club play whenever I drop in. My warning cough, for instance, when a player shapes for a move that I do not recommend, is generally taken as final.

"Very unsocial lot here," he sighed. closing his eyes and extending two fists. I chose the one with the white "Nobody queen protruding from it. won't play with me any more.

"Our standard is very high." I smiled, swinging a pawn up to Q4. "I will throw out a few hints as we go

"Ta." he said. raising a hand.

"Ready?"

A shudder ran through the room-I frowned for silence. His hand came down with a swishing movement; I riposted with a knight, and he moved again in a flash. Not to be outdone by a beginner. I made a few rapid but illconsidered moves to keep up with him. He snaffled my knight and I rather lost my temper, whereat the play degenerated into a snarling scuffle in the centre of the board.

"How's that for a start?" he said, holding up a handful of my pieces.
"Discrepabil!" I said. "You mis-

conceive the whole point of the game. Chess demands deep thought and delicate finesse.

"Well, you took two of my pawns,"

he said indignantly.

"That was for tactical reasons only." "Ready?" he cried, raising his hand.

I ducked as he whipped out a bishop, but I was not to be stampeded this time. I applied two fingers to my temple and feinted to move a knight, noting his reaction. His hand swooped halfway to his queen. I tried it again to be on the safe side. This is an invaluable device for discovering the intentions of an impetuous player. With the more deliberate type the reaction is difficult to detect, and it is advisable to move a bright object before his eyes from time to time to ensure against his having fallen into a trance.

I played a different piece altogether, but he replied like lightning, and during the mêlée that followed I lost my queen. I savagely swiped three pawns in succession, and sat back, stiff with horror, surveying the carnage.

"I've never seen such monstrous play in my life," I fumed. "You've ruined the whole thing. Just look at

"I'll never learn this game," he said mournfully. "I've got a lot of pieces I haven't even touched vet.'

"No wonder the club won't play with you," I said. "I resign, purely as a protest.

Now you're turning against me," he cried, wringing his hands. "I can

see it in your eyes."
"Not at all," I said. "It is merely
that I object to all this insensate butchery. It is not chess.'

'Couldn't you give me another

chance?" he whimpered.
"Certainly not," I said, amid an approving murmur from the members. "Chess is not your game. Try something more vigorous—say athletics. With that over-arm action of yours you should do well with throwing the javelin or the discus."

"I've tried it," he moaned. "But it was no good. They all turned

against me.

"Indeed?" "Yes. I threw the discus right out of the ground and into the High Street. It took 'em hours to find the bloomin' thing-they weren't half wild with me."

He stared at the board and moved

one more piece.

"I have it!" I cried, forcibly preventing him from taking my remaining

knight. "The Olympic games!"

"They won't play with me," he sighed. "I don't know me own strength, that's my trouble."

"Get a "Try it!" I exclaimed. "Get a discus and take it along. You never know."

'Don't blame me if they cancel it at the last minute," he said at the door.

"Nobody won't play with me." Spirits rose all round at his departure, and by general request I played an exhibition game with Mr. Emery Wheel. Within an hour we had moved three pawns each and got them enmeshed in a most attractive knot in the centre of the board. Mr. Wheel's next move was a very beautiful one, and the play arising from it seemed likely to be extremely subtle, if not downright incomprehensible. After prolonged thought my elbow slipped off the edge of the table, and I inadvertently moved a fourth pawn amid general applause. It will go down as a classic-indeed, I am inclined to think that there is no way of refuting it. Mr. Wheel concurred and very

properly resigned.

This is chess as it ought to be played. and I am glad to say that we have not seen the new member since. As for the Olympic games this year, you would do well to choose your seat with more than ordinary care. I should not myself like to be sitting in the line of fire when the discus starts whizzing about.

Lady Addle and the Railways

BENGERS, HERTS, 1948

To the Minister of Transport, Berkeley Square, W.1

Y DEAR, DEAR MR. BARNES,—I write this letter with a full heart and loving thoughts to one who is now a colleague of mine, and I know that any criticisms that I have to offer will be taken in

the same spirit.

First let me say that, unlike many of my friends, I welcome the thought that the railways now belong to me, as I am told they do. It recalls the good old spacious days of yore when ownership was on a grand scale. My maternal ancestor, the 1st Duke of Droitwich, owned two splendid mountains in Jamaica, four zoos in India and well over three thousand slaves in South Georgia (though they were never actually counted). The fifth Earl Coot owned most of the west coast of England, including the fishing rights of the Bristol Channel. And even as recently as my dear father's day a whole street in Paris belonged to him. I believe, though he would never tell us where it was or anything about it.

So vou see, dear Mr. Barnes, how proud I am of my new rights, though I think it is a pity that I have to share them with so many third-class passengers. But noblesse oblige, even in

nationalization.

I thought you would be interested to hear my impressions on the first day of my new trust, together with one or two suggestions for improvements. I very seldom go to London nowadays, but I felt it my duty to make a special journey-dear papa often had to go to Paris to visit his property, I knowin order to give you an owner's advice.

First, then, when I arrived at Great Bengers station, I shook hands with the station-master and all the porters, somewhat to their surprise and I think delight, and then asked to see the porters' sitting-room. There was some little demur over this, and indeed I am not surprised, for when I saw the room I was horrified. Quite bare, containing only hard wooden seats, with no cushions, no curtains or pictures and nothing cosy about it except a good coal fire which was very pleasant to see and to sit by, as I did until my train arrived. I feel sure you have many things to attend to, so I am arranging to send down some old framed groups of Bengers' houseparties, which are of great local interest, and I think I can make a few most attractive cushions by bleaching some old black-out curtains and embroidering engines in raffia on them, which will be both cheerful and original. I have always made a point of brightness in all staff rooms, and the Bengers' servants' hall and housekeeper's room are second to none.

At last, after a wait of nearly twenty minutes, the train came in. And, dear Mr. Barnes, I must ask you never to let this happen again. Punctuality is said to be the politeness of kings. Perhaps it is because of my long association with many royal families that I feel so strongly about this, and really insist, please, that no train in this our beloved England shall be late in future. I think one must allow a little latitude with the Welsh, as they

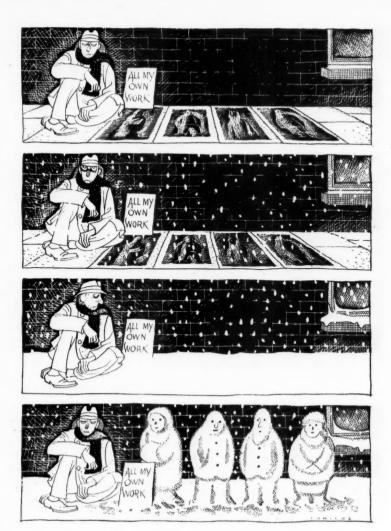
are, of course, artistic.

When I arrived at the terminus I had a most interesting time seeing round all the offices, including the buffet kitchen, where I spent some time showing an assistant my own special recipe for making pancakes out of stale rock cakes moistened with lemon squash. She confided to me at the end how much she regretted the days before nationalization took place.

I saw many little things that might well be improved-small shabbinesses and lack of charm. A coat of gay paint here, a rub up with brass polish there would work wonders, and, dear Mr. Barnes, I have an idea which may provide the solution to this problem. I hear constantly now of some people called drones and butterflies who are, I gather, not in any regular employment. Would it not be a kindness to them, and also assist us, to offer them the job of brightening up our railways? If you want someone to direct this good work I am sure just the right person would be my dear sister Mipsie. She is in rather low financial water just now and would be grateful for employment, I know. She is so clever, and will devote herself to any task, however lowly, for a small four-figure salary. Perhaps you will think it over and let me know.

Your sincere co-owner,

BLANCHE ADDLE OF EIGG. M. D.



Quicker Turn-Round

HE great Wagon Turn-Round caused miracles of activity at Tipper's Hill. On the north side, where the old Great Southern line threw out its tentacles of sidings, they cleared trucks that had been there for months, and even found a couple of V-Day ones. On the south side, whose sidings fanned out from what used to be the old East-Central, was shunting talent that challenged all England. In nine days they shifted a thousand trucks all but a few hundred, and sent rude messages round to the north side about a 1916 load of straw packing which they swore had a Great Southern label.

This roused old Tim Tapwill, the north side champion, to retaliation. He got up in the small hours of one midnight and went trespassing on the south side to see what he could stir up with his shunt pole. He delved right into the hillside in his zeal and unearthed a completely hidden truck. He chalked on it "Greetings from the Bower War" and went home to bed. Next night two prowlers from the south made a similar excursion into northern territory and brought up nothing less than an old engine of the Rocket class. On this they scrawled "Happy New Year from Stephenson." Two more nights, with more volunteers turning out, brought to light wagons and loads from before business history, and the decomposed packing under which they were buried was disposed of by the railways as chemical fertilizer.

Such a turn-round effort will never need to be repeated at Tipper's Hill. The wagons that used to be shunted into the bays at each side of the hill now pass right through on the line they found where the hill was.



"The price is fifty guineas, which includes full copyright in the story of how it was killed . . ."

A Sea Shanty

H, England is a fair land, and who shall forsake her?
(With a yo-ho-ho-ho and a fee-fi-fo-fum)
Shed tears for us, England, we're off to Jamaica
To eat up the ginger and drink up the rum.

Farewell, lovely island, our home and our treasure (Heave anchors away, boys, for Dar-es-Salaam), What joy is there far from your shores, or what pleasure? What comfort in sunshine or coconut-palm?

Thrice cursed be the aunts who reside in Bermuda, Who want us to visit them, so it appears, To bathe in the surf with absurd barracuda, To eat till the gravy comes out of our ears!

Good-bye, dearest England, our niece in Rhodesia
Has suddenly found she is lonely, poor thing,
But we will come home with the first little freesia
(Oh, blow the ban down with the trumpets of Spring!)

Oh, England is a fair land, and who shall desert her?
So cold and so wretched, so dowdy, so grey;
Alas! But we have to see Jack in Bizerta,
So weep for us, England, till April or May.
V. G.

H. J.'s Belles-Lettres

HIS Belle-Lettre might be classified under several heads. Rather doubtfully I plump for "Fiction re Elves," though a strong case could be made for "Miscellaneous."

Now Tim Pym was braw; he had won medals for it, and a more strong-minded, unimaginative young man you would not find between the "Prospect of Whitby" and Claridges. One day, as he was returning from his work at the Treasury and grimly reading the new Michael Innesafter all, he was expected to be a bit of a highbrow: it went with the job—a voice whispered in his ear, "I'se ickle but I'se cute." Indignantly he searched every nook and cranny of the compartment. (Having been a Rugger forward at Balliol he found this possible, if unpopular.) Yet he could find nothing that could have been responsible, not a child, not a drunk, not a ventriloquist practising. As for the Little People, you may be sure there was no thought of them in Tim's well-garnished mind. He dismissed the matter irritably; but in the lift the voice again wheedled at him in its snuggling tone. "Me a poppet," it said. Tim swung round, but behind him was only a poster of the Vic-Wells Ballet (Les Sylphides-The Hound of the Baskervilles-Murder in the Cathedral). The lift stopped and Tim dashed out, ripe for trouble, so when he heard a peal of shrill laughter come from a half-opened iron door in a dark corner of the station he dived straight through. Little hands immediately encompassed him with the lightest and toughest of cobwebs, and staggering forward, pinioned and helpless, he found himself in a flowery meadow.

At his feet lush grass stretched away to a golden throne on which, surrounded by hundreds of pottery gnomes, sat a butterfly wearing a jewelled crown. With an air of quiet authority the King of the Little People said in a sad, sweet voice: "Mortal, dance to our piping; we would be At once, from dozens of unseen pipes came music of a piercing beauty. "I cannot dance because my feet are bound," replied Tim, hoping that once freed he might "You can sway your torso in time to the music," replied the king; "alternatively, regale us with a merry This command seemed easier to obey than the first, so Tim told them the one about the secretary's carpet, the one about the file that got lost in the Private Office and the one about the Gold Import (E. & O.E.) Bill. A chorus of little yawns, light as sycamore leaves, told him he had lost his audience. "Mortal," said the king to Tim's relief, "we are not amused and cannot appoint you jester to our court; but lest we should seem ungrateful for your efforts we present you with a mark of our esteem before we return you to the Upper World." He made a sign and Tim found himself walking home with a circlet of pure silver clamped irremovably on his brow.

Stricken, he regained his home, but when he continued to wear his hat during the evening his mother's intuition told her that something was amiss, and whipping it off she discovered what it hid. "Why, my dear," she said, "surely you do not covet a receding forehead?"—for she assumed it to be a device similar to the bands worn by children with protruding teeth. Biting into his pipe, Tim told her all. Mrs. Pym set to work with grease, files and a chisel, but it was of fairy workmanship and did not yield. The best they could do was to hide it with a bandage. For a few days the story of an accident was accepted without question at the office, but a carelessly fastened safety-pin was his undoing. During the committee stage of the Thalers (Bulk Purchase) Bill, which Tim was attending with a group of Treasury officials, his bandage suddenly



"I suppose you are going to offer the same old excuse for being late, Smith?"

unwound. Loud whistles broke from the Members. "I thought," remarked a prominent thorn from the Opposition, "that the Chancellor informed us we were short of silver, yet his bureaucrats can bedeck themselves like heathen idols." "One is impelled to inquire," said an Independent, "how come?" "It is a wile of the other side," a Government supporter said doubtfully, coming to his leader's assistance.

With chilling fury the Minister turned to examine his subordinate. Hitherto, so lowly was Tim's status, nobody above the rank of Assistant Secretary had ever looked at him. Stammering and confused, he made a false move. "It is not silver; it is only plate," he mendaciously asserted, at which the chairman of the committee said it verged on contempt for a Civil Servant to appear before a committee of the House in a spurious fillet. Faced with this terrible threat, Tim made matters worse by saying it really was genuine after all. The discussion of the Bill was resumed in a grim calm.

The attitude of the Opposition made it necessary that Tim should be immediately restrained from the performance of his functions, and he was placed on sick-leave. Hopeless of ever regaining his place in the world of men, he brokenly told his mother that his only future was with the Little People. He must succeed at his next visit in entertaining them so much that they would keep him with them for ever. Each day thenceforward his mother visited the public library and returned laden with books of recitations and collections of anecdotes which Tim, his methodical training coming to his assistance, worked carefully through, summarizing, indexing, committing to memory. On the tenth day, he looked up wearily from Pawky Persiflage (Glasgow, 1872) and announced that he had reached the end of his tether. He must put his fate to the test without further delay. For three weeks he travelled to and fro, soliciting the Little People to give him another chance. At length they relented and he was again brought before their king, who with weary courtesy

complimented him on his assiduity and, while refusing him employment, offered him a pair of ear-rings, each representing one of his subjects in pewter. Tim's desperate pleadings, however, at last touched the king's tender heart, and with a keen recollection of the price of failure Tim plunged earnestly into his repertoire. Extracts from Handy-Andy, The Bon Gaultier Ballads and Artemus Ward were followed by twenty-four anecdotes about Scotchmen who went to heaven, for Tim had been well grounded and knew how to collect his material under headings. When, however, he announced he was proceeding to deal with Scotchmen who went to hell the king's poise foundered. "Mortal, we have suffered enough," he thundered. "We ban you from our kingdom for ever and strip from you those marks of our approval we have bestowed on ye. Hoots awa!" With a look of horror the monarch hastily ended his speech, and Tim found himself passing through the exit of the Underground, rid of his adornment and free once more to concentrate on his work, though ever after he had to contend with a reputation for unsoundness and found himself seconded a good deal to other departments.

The Gem-Like Flame

HERE was a chap—I forget his name—Who burned with a hard and gem-like flame; His spirit was pure, his spirit was white, And it shone like a candle in the night.

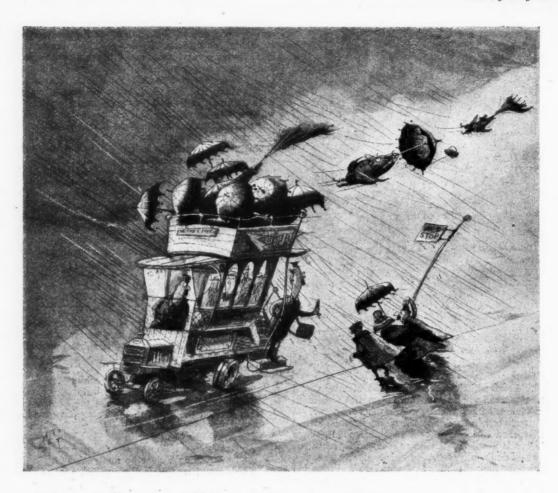
This singular state that chap achieved By living up to the things he believed; He spurned the Better, pursued the Best, He wedded the Form to the Thing Expressed,

He strove for beauty with all his heart, And worshipped Life as a form of Art; And everything Vulgar he flung aside Till his soul was perfectly purified.

And that explains how the poor chap came To burn with a hard and gem-like flame; And that explains why my old friend Mike Laid him out with a marlinespike.



"I don't think much of the Railway Executive Committee's cooking."



"Full up inside-two only on top!"

Scarlet and Red

"Y dear, buck up!"
said Charles
(his voice unsteady
keeping exasperation in control).
"My love, my sweet—oh, damn!
we're late already!"

Louise—
how often she'd rehearsed the
rôle
Patient Griselda—
murmured: "Charles! Now, please..."
looked in the mirror,
gave her hat
a pat;
turned from the glass, and looked at
me,
and sighed
"Does this match that?"

(Belloc, forgive me this twist on what you said:

her dress was scarlet, but her hat was red.)

"Come on," said Charles,
"It matches perfectly."

Louise ignored him, and she looked at me.

Dilemma worse than Paris's: in fact the colours swore like cats, but tact, tact, tact. . . .

"My dear Louise, of course they match," I lied.

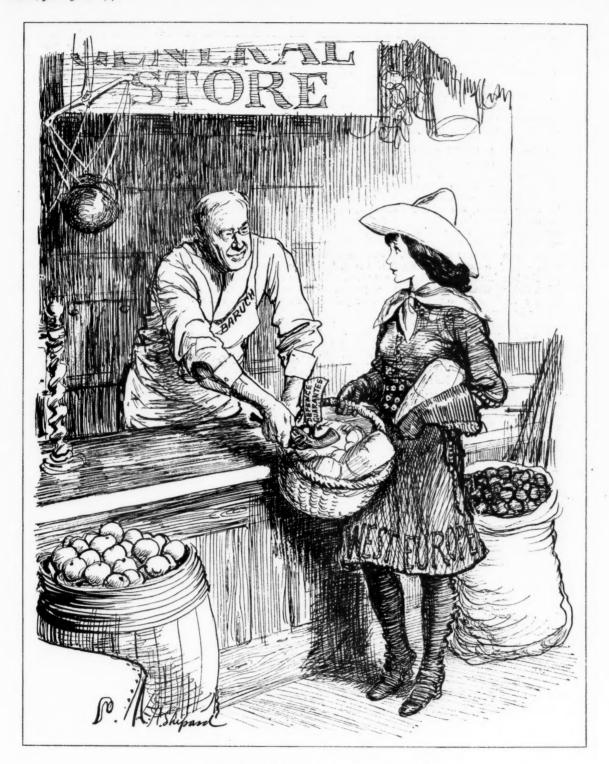
And off we went.

But, once we were outside, Doubt buttonholed Louise and transfixed her fatally, like the Ancient Mariner.

And all the way,
by Underground to Town,
station by station
Louise was more cast down
(though Charles, poor fool! was
cheerful).

And I knew that we were for it: AND we had it, too.

It served Charles right—scarlet does not match red—but, tactful reader, what would you have said? R. C. S.



A BIT MORE IN THE BASKET

"If I had my way, you'd take this too."

TUESDAY, January 20th. The House of Commons was in risible mood to-day when it reassembled after the Christmas recess, and nearly everything gained a laugh. Even Sir WALDRON SMITHERS, who does not usually try to arouse laughter in the House, got his

He did it by gravely inquiring of a Minister: "Have you ever heard of a thing called the 'vicious spiral'?" It is difficult to say why, but this won a roar of delight from the crowded floor, which, it is fair to say, the winner seemed to find embarrassing.

A moment later there was another laugh when Mr. Adam McKinlay inquired whether a Member was "in order in shouting 'To hell with the English!'" Mr. Speaker said he hadn't heard it, but Colonel Gomme-Duncan (who sits for a Scottish division) apologized for having said it.

Scarcely had decorum regained control when laughter (as the B.B.C. Drama Department would say) struck again. Mr. Arthur Woodburn, the Scottish Secretary, promised that something would be done "in the near future." Mr. WILLIS inquired: "When is the near future—this has been under discussion for eighteen months?"

To which the Minister replied: "About ten days."

That fairly lifted the roof. But there was better to come. Mr. QUINTIN HOGG, one of the quickest-witted men in the House, opened his mouth and fairly put his foot in it. He was asking a question about town planning in Oxford City, his constituency. And he said: "Oxford City is slightly unbalanced..."

The resultant roar of joy stopped the show. Members clutched convulsively at their throats and slapped their own—and other people's—knees. Mr. Hogg gave a fair imitation of his fellow-barrister, Mr. Gillie Potter, waiting nonchalantly for the applause to die down. Which eventually it did—from sheer exhaustion.

The House paused to cheer the return of Mr. Winston Churchill, who had been holiday-making in Morocco, and then, Questions over, went on to consider the Second Reading of the Government's Bill to give annuities to Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip. The somewhat badtempered debate on the subject just before Christmas, when a determined attempt—led by no less a figure than Mr. Maurice Webb, Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party — was made to cut the Princess's allow-

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done:

Tuesday, January 20th.—House of Lords: Palestine. House of Commons: The Royal Allowances.

Wednesday, January 21st.—House of Lords: Civil Aviation. House of Commons: Hector v. Hector.

Thursday, January 22nd.—House of Commons: Foreign Affairs.

ance by £5,000 a year, had been thought to end the matter. But after a short debate, mainly remarkable for the number of extremely brief speeches, there was another division, and seventeen of the Government's normal supporters, including both the Communists, voted against the annuities. And (although the Government Whips were active) about half the Labour Party was missing from the division. The Party managers were (patently) not amused, but, as someone pointed out, they could not



Impressions of Parliamentarians

30. Mr. Oliver Lyttelton (Aldershot)

command a majority in the Party for disciplinary action, as most of the Members would be in the dock, so perhaps nothing more will be heard about it.

Talking of money, Sir Stafford Cripps mentioned one of those little mysteries that occasionally puzzle the experts: What's happened to all our silver coins? Apparently there is a great shortage. Sir Stafford does not think the Black Market operators have them—so where are they? Nobody knows.

The House noted with approval that Mr. Edward Fellowes, Second Clerk Assistant of the House, was back in his place at the Table after a hardworking few weeks in Ceylon, where he had been supervising the birth of a Parliament. They felt sure that the

new-fledged Parliament of Ceylon will be as quietly efficient as are Mr. Fel-Lowes's many other works.

Their Lordships were hearing yet another instalment of the grim and sad serial story of Palestine. The Archbishop of York, disclaiming any anti-Semitic feeling (which he said he

feeling (which he said he "detested"), pleaded that the Holy places of Christianity should be defended. Lord Listowel, for the Government, listed the casualties among British troops, police and civilians in Palestine in the seven weeks since the United Nations made its partition decision. It was a depressing list—twenty soldiers killed, seventy-two injured, fourteen police killed, forty wounded, eight civilians killed, two wounded—and Arabs and Jews by the hundred killed and wounded in the racial fighting.

WEDNESDAY, January 21st.—
Hector battled with Hector to-day
—McNeil and Hughes. There was a
question about Poles in Britain, and
Mr. Hector Hughes, who is an Irish
man, representing Scottish Aberdeen,
asked an innocent supplementary
question. Mr. Hector McNeil,
Minister of State, who is so verrry
Scottish that there are occasional
jovial cries for an interpreter, replied
(rather inaudibly) to the effect that he
himself came from a Scottish constituency and had a Scottish name.

So Mr. Hughes, his Irish (and maybe his Welsh and Scottish) blood up, complained to the Speaker that a reflection had been cast upon him by the inference that he was Welsh. Whereupon Mr. McNeil humbly apologized for so unjustified a slur. Mr. Hughes bowed in graceful forgiveness—but then up spoke brave Mr. George Thomas, who is Welsh, and who wanted to know how it was an insult to be taken for a Welshman.

As Mr. McNeil rose to make a further apology, Mr. Speaker got up too and stopped the race war.

Mr. Piratin, who is the Back-bench of the Parliamentary Communist Party, wanted to know a little more about "Protocol M," which is said to contain the Communist plan for the wrecking of the Marshall economic relief plan. Naturally, Mr. Piratin was disinclined to admit the authenticity of the document, and compared it with the Zinoviev Letter which figured so prominently in battles long ago and which was also the subject of much doubt.

But Mr. McNeil replied sweetly that he was satisfied about the authenticity



"And this is the very bed, your Majesty, that Queen Matilda slept in."

of the Protocol—adding that he doubted whether he had as close a knowledge of the Zinoviev Letter as had Mr. Piratin. Which ended that.

Mr. EDWARDS, for the Admiralty, announced that various ships of the Royal Navy, including some famous ones like Rodney, Queen Elizabeth, Nelson, Valiant and Renown, and seven cruisers, were to be scrapped. It was not possible, said he, to make them fit for modern warfare. Lord HALL, First Lord of the Admiralty, read the same statement to the Lords.

Afterwards their Lordships discussed Britain's State-owned air services, which have all (save one) been losing money at a handsome rate. Lord SWINTON opened the debate.

He complained that every passenger on a British air-line was subsidized by the taxpayer—some of them to the extent of £60 a time. He had a few criticisms to make about the running of the lines.

Lord Nathan of Churt, the Minister of Civil Aviation, was downright in his reply—that, for the sake of the prestige good air-lines bring to Britain, we ought to be prepared to go on losing a certain amount of money for several years to come, if need be. Civil

aviation being still, relatively, in its infancy, we must be prepared to grant it a little pocket money, to ensure that it grew up to be a strong self-reliant man, a credit to its parents. But he



Impressions of Parliamentarians

31. Mr. Buchanan (Gorbals)
Minister of Pensions.

was going to call in a few more business men to aid in the task of buying aircraft.

The Commons were engaged in an extremely technical discussion on the

Cinematograph Films Bill, which deals in general with the protection of the British film industry. The talk was full of "quotas" and "ad valorem import duties."

THURSDAY, January 22nd.—Mr. Ernest Bevin to-day made what was (in your scribe's opinion) correctly described as his greatest speech. The subject was British foreign policy resultant on the breakdown of the talks of the Council of Foreign Ministers in London last month.

It was not a happy speech, but it was one that—as usual—put the view of the majority of British people with directness and clarity, particularly in dealing with Soviet Russia. It appears that Britain is to try to maintain her middle-of-the-road policy, veering neither too much towards the United States nor too much towards the Soviet Union. For that there was general approval, with the exception of the usual group of D.L.W.s—which, as every Parliamentarian knows, means "Disgruntled Left Wingers."

Mr. Anthony Eden made it clear that the Conservatives have few complaints about the present conduct of foreign affairs.



"'. . . and 'ere's tuppence-ha'penny,' 'e said-' buy yourself a packet o' cigarettes.'"

Housebreaking Notes from Paris

HE burglary in our flat while we were in England has become the main topic at Mme. Boulot's, and for the moment we are the centre of attraction.

Mme. Boulot's patrons are an intimate crowd, and like to know full details of all local events. It is not enough to say "We had a burglary." Each article stolen must be specified, described and valued, to the accompaniment of suitable expressions of commiseration.

We are, however, inclined to be discursive, and it is this tendency in our conversation which led to a bit of trouble last night.

I had concluded my narrative by saying: "I have naturally submitted a full report to the police." That, I thought, closed the discussion in the best traditions of Mme. Boulot's. But not a bit of it.

"The police?" M. Jacques laughed briefly. "It is to waste one's time to submit a report to the police."

This was a most ill-advised remark.

M. Jacques knows perfectly well that

M. Albert's brother-in-law is a "sergent de ville."

M. Albert's reaction was swift.

"There are those," he said, "who would do better to avoid any contact with the police."

This, we all knew, was directed exclusively at M. Jacques. It might be said of us at Mme. Boulot's that, like the Bourbons, we learn nothing and forget nothing, and M. Jacques's unfortunate brush with the Préfecture in the matter of petrol coupons is still fresh in our minds.

It is also fresh in the mind of M. Jacques, having set him back ten thousand francs in amendes.

"It is not unknown," he said, "for the police to organize robberies in districts with which they are familiar."

districts with which they are familiar."
"It is more simple," retorted M.
Albert, "for an individual who lives in
the same street to organize a robbery,
especially in the house opposite."

This was an open declaration of war.

M. Jacques owns the garage opposite our flat.

It was at this critical moment that inspiration came to me.

"Among the objects stolen," I remarked casually, "was the accordion of my wife." As it happened, this was true.

MM. Albert and Jacques paused in their search for further ammunition.

"It is of a piggishness the most base," said M. Jacques, "to steal a musical instrument—even an accordion."
"Agreed," replied M. Albert. "When

"Agreed," replied M. Albert. "When one reminds oneself of the fashion in which my Uncle Lebrun played the violin, it is to weep."

"My Aunt Dubois," said Mme. Boulot, who had been out of the conversation for too long, "played the harp like an angel."

"Which," said M. Jacques gracefully, "she is without doubt doing at this moment."

I felt that I could now safely leave.

Mme. Boulot's sobs followed me to
the door; M. Albert was weeping
happily, his arm round the neck of
M. Jacques, who was singing an air
from Tosca.

Normality had returned to Mme. Boulot's,

T isn't often that you see everybody running up the escalators as they did last Monday morning. It isn't often you see a ticket-collector's box being pushed around like a submarine suffering from depth-charges. The ticket-collector at Bond Street Station was actually in his box at the time, but he wasn't collecting tickets. He sat tight, with a strained white face. clutching his stool. So far I have seen nothing about his ordeal in the news-

It isn't often that you can ride up the steps from the booking-hall to the street as I did last Monday morning. But then, it isn't often you find yourself helplessly sandwiched and squashed by four stout women. Once I had stopped struggling, drawn in my elbows and lifted my feet from the concrete, the sensation—a rare mixture of levitation and locomotion-was not unpleasant. I touched down again about halfway across Oxford Street.

It isn't often that I run full out in Oxford Street, or join queues without knowing where they are heading. But then, it isn't often I am deputed to cover the January Sales on behalf of my household. The occasion was, in fact, unique.

I joined the tails of half a dozen queues before I chanced upon the right one-the one leading to the "Bargain stock-size mustard herringbone tweed suit; was £17, now £2," and my various other commissions. This queue had already lapped the block twice and now threatened to traverse the frontage of another mammoth store, but a neat bit of leverage at the last coil by two powerful policemen soon corrected the angle of drift. With more than an hour to wait I unfolded my newspaper and attacked the first leader .

"They 'aven't 'alf marked things down, 'ave they?"

"On'y six-ten for that fuller figure swagger!"

Just do for your Mabs." "What you after, ducks?"

"Like to know, wouldn't you!"

"Oh, go on, tell us!"
"An' let the whole bloomin' queue know? No fear!"

"You can whisper—if this 'ere gent doesn't mind.'

I looked up and smiled. They put their heads together and sibilated. Then the volume-control was turned up again.
"You don't say? A real 'New Look'

ensemble for three, and it was eighteen!"

"Well, it's a model, see. Made for the trade.'

Commission on Sales

"I'll be content with one of those 'old look' jumper outfits—were five pounds, fifteen bob to clear."

I raised my hat and coughed.

"Excuse me," I said, "but am I to understand that you believe every figure on these price-tickets? Surely you won't be unaware that prices are often marked up so that they can be marked down more heavily.

A glance between the two women decided the batting order.

"If you're alludin' to the jumper outfit," said the heavier one, "you're right off it. I've had my eye on it for nearly twelve months and it's been a steady five quid till Saturday, see!

"That's the trouble with men," said the prospective owner of the "New Look" ensemble, "know-alls, and suspicious know-alls at that."

You mustn't misunderstand me," I said. "I had no intention of . . .

"If you think prices 'aven't come down why're you queuein' for 'em?'

"He doesn't think they've come down, Pam. He thinks they've gone

up."
"No, no . . ." I protested—or, rather, began to protest, for at that moment the queue lurched into life. I moved forward, impelled by the ferrule of an umbrella.

Five minutes later I was in the Bargain Basement.

I was not unprepared for the struggle which ensued. I did not panic. One should not assume, merely because a shop sticks up a "Sale" notice, that the normal rules of commerce are in abevance, that the profit motive has been temporarily superseded by a bout of philanthropic come-and-get-it. No, sir, business is always business.

I struggled to the suits counter, and along it until my eye caught the mustard herringbone. I placed my hand on the hem to establish prior lien and signalled to the assistant.

"Two pounds, eighteen coupons, and d'you want it wrapped?" she said, extending her left hand and snipping at the air with the scissors in her

right.
"I suppose there's some guaranfading?"

The whirling cloud of fabrics about me draped itself into sudden immobility and a dozen eyes turned to inspect me.

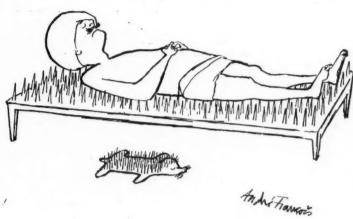
The girl looked blank.
"Oh, surely!" I said. "Caveat emptor and all that. I take it you have a right to dispose of these goods, that you accept the implied condition that the bulk shall correspond in quality with the sample, that . . ."

The mustard herringbone was suddenly snatched from my grasp-from behind. I swung round and set off in pursuit, leaving my gloves and clothingbooks on the counter. She could not get far in this mêlée and I soon ran her down among the blouses. surrendered without a struggle.

Inside two minutes I was back at The girl grinned and the counter. again brandished her scissors. I looked at my watch, consulted the list of my other commissions and said that I would take the mustard herringbone suit, please.

She took up my clothing-books one "You'd by one and opened them. better run along home and get some coupons," she said.

I ran to the nearest phone-box and dialled 999. Hon



At the Play

The Dragon and the Dove and A Change for the Worse (MERCURY)—Flowers for the Living (New LINDSEY)

PERHAPS Mr. James
Bridie's two short
plays at the Mercury are
best described as moralityfrolics. They were written

during the war for a tour of the Pilgrim Players. Both are slight, but the slightness is more apparent in The Dragon and the Dove because this is a string of odd little episodes compounded of religion, farce and pantomime, whereas A Change for the Worse is in a fairly consistent vein of mock fantasy. The Dragon is—speaking dramatically—our invaluable old friend, the Devil, who takes on the

form of a glib young monk, while the Dove is a novice sharing the cell of her hermit uncle Abraham. Uncle and niece live on either side of a stout brick wall and spend curious days chewing dried lentils and shouting spiritual profundities at one another through a ventilator. Even for the North African Desert sixteen hundred years ago this wasn't much of a life for a spirited young girl, and I am sure nobody in the audience who had ever been to the pictures was surprised when Maria was abducted somewhat easily by the monk. When news comes that she has fallen, like a plummet, to a disorderly inn at Memphis, Abraham is unwillingly persuaded by his worldly friend Ephraem to dress up as a general and occupy the journey to Memphis in broadening and deepening his vocabulary. The inn is heavy with every kind of villainy, its mistress a creature of nightmare, and quite good simple fun lies in the innocent old gentle-

man's defiant Poonarisms and in his adventures leading to Maria's rescue—after which she goes back to lentils and ethics with an eagerness I am afraid I found suspicious. The story is adapted from Miss Helen Waddell's The Desert Fathers. It is decidedly thin, but there are pleasing lines, and also opportunities for hearty comedy of which Mr. ROBERT SPEAIGHT as Abraham and Mr. NORMAN CHIDGEY as Ephraem make the most. And Miss ELENNA FRASER'S delicately faltering Maria is delightful.

In the second play, which is in verse of an ambitious looseness, Satan appears in person and spurs his A.D.C. to swap the fortunes of a hypochondriae goldsmith and his snobbish wife with those of a poor and virtuous fisher couple. In suggesting that Satan expects this exchange to bring delicious complications Mr. BRIDIE seems to rate the infernal intelligence unfashionably low. For naturally the goldsmith sheds rheumatics at the first intoxicating sight of fishing tackle, his

[The Dragon and the Dove

wife finds redemption in a broom and their harassed neighbours cross the street to ease and plenty with no more difficulty than you or I should meet. Mr. Richard Lake's fantasticated set gives an atmosphere ripe for nonsense. The stings in the tail of Mr. Bridle's doggerel are of very mixed potency, but the best are passing toxic and of these Mr. E. Martin Browne's lively St. Eloi has the pick. Everybody speaks well.

Together these plays make too unsubstantial partners, and either would be seen to better advantage in more solid company.

The New Lindsey has a near-winner in Flowers for the Living, a powerful play about London's slums, by Mr. TONI BLOCK. It treats

several closely related problems under one tattered umbrella, and with a skill which, to my mind, only falls short in one of them, though this happens to head the list: the return of a girl who has made good in the Services to a brawling and sordid tenement. That this must indeed be a problem nobody could doubt, but if Lily had been such a success in the A.T.S. I find it hard to believe she would not have come home

with a little more courage and warmth. As it is she is so paralysed by revulsion that she even jibs at marrying her decent galumphing young man lest marriage and children should drag her down again as they have dragged her mother. To me this isn't convincing, but all the rest is completely so. The worn mother, as brave as she is tired, is finely drawn, with true humour and without exaggeration, and Miss THORA HIRD plays her superbly. A most affecting performance. The woman is almost too exhausted to think, but still she drives herself on. Shall she cut loose from her boozing bully of a husband to try to make her children a fresh home? But here is the core of the tragedy, that none except Lily wishes to leave the awful little den, for it is convenient for awful little In the end Lily lives. comes to, brought round by the astringent good sense of her sergeant-major, but the other problems remain. The author cannot be ex-

pected to do more than state them clearly, which he has done. This is not a great play, but it is an intensely human one. It forces us to think, and therefore the West End should find a stage for it. A production full of telling detail, by Mr. John Oxford, is helped by a set of formidable squalor, again by Mr. RICHARD LAKE. Miss JOY SHELTON'S Lily is effective up to a point, and the point is where freer emotions are badly wanted. Mr. SYDNEY TAFLER talks straight from the sergeant's mess and Miss Rowena Gregory straight from the darkest recesses of the back row of the one-and-threepennies. Eric.

Optional

HAVE not worn my evening suit since June 1939, but I felt that the dinner to Lord Bulge was an occasion when for business reasons I must look my best. It was true that the card of invitation stated broadmindedly that dress was optional, but I had a strong feeling that Lord Bulge would take a poor view of those who could not raise a boiled shirt.

Forgetting lessons learned in the Army about the value of preliminary reconnaissance, I made no preparations until the vital evening arrived. The dinner was at 7.30, and it was not until 6 P.M. that I dragged my evening suit from the wardrobe, spread it out on the bed, and looked it over. The waistcoat seemed in pretty good shape, but there was a large moth-hole in the back of the jacket, and the trousers had a

curiously limp look.

We bachelors are not easily intimidated by sartorial crises, and I tackled the moth-hole with confidence. A piece of an old sock glued inside the jacket and coloured with Indian ink disposed of the moth-hole. In a strong light the extraordinary blackness of the patch perhaps tended to make the rest of the jacket look a little grey, but I trusted that the proprietors of the Empress Restaurant were staunch supporters of the Minister of Fuel and kept their illuminations down to a minimum.

Ironed through a hot towel the trousers took on a splendid crease. It was not precisely and exactly in the same place as the old crease, but the two met quite often, and the general effect was really quite striking. With a sense of pride I carried the suit into the sitting-room and draped it over a clothes-horse in front of the gas-fire.

Next I tackled the shoes. They looked rather dim, and I had none of the cream with which I used to polish them, so I tried ordinary bootpolish, but the effect was not happy. Furniture-polish, however, proved an

admirable substitute.

The shirt was perhaps the biggest problem. It had developed a curious green stain bang in the middle of the part that would show. A wet flannel had no effect whatever on the stain, and ammonia was equally useless. Luckily I had a box of white chalks, and I found that by chalking over the mark I made the stain almost invisible. No doubt as the dinner proceeded the chalk would wear off, but later in the evening the appearance of the stain People would would not matter.



"One pair white flannels and two cotton frocks."

merely suppose that a neighbour had made a bad shot with a spoonful of

Then I went in search of the socks. I found one of them in my Unpaid Bills drawer, but the other seemed to have been filched by a passing burglar. I was still looking feverishly for it when the grandfather clock struck seven and reminded me that I had used it to muffle the bell of the clock, following complaints from the man upstairs. I added the socks and the collar and tie to the collection draped over the clothes-horse, and then took a quick bath. Nothing was left but the mere operation of dressing, but here followed a shattering blow. years have a curious effect upon a man's shape, and my first warning of doom came with the trousers. They refused to meet. I did what I could with a large safety-pin, and turned my attention to the collar, and then followed perhaps the most exasperating half-hour of my life. In the end I tried slitting the neck of the shirt at the back and making an incision in the collar, but the shirt simply split right down with a horrible rending noise, leaving the collar hanging round my neck like a limp banana.

I arrived at the dinner last of all the guests, wearing my lounge suit. Lord Bulge greeted me with unexpected warmth. He also was wear-

ing a lounge suit.
"We must sit together," he said, "as we appear to be the only two who are not in evening dress. I thought I'd come in a lounge suit to keep the undressed ones in countenance . . ."
"So did I," I said, wondering

whether it was socks, moth-holes, or the size of his neck that had defeated Lord Bulge.

S

p te d

wG

tl

u

ir B B

a

n

b

w

ti

ate

d

li

o t

n A



"Something light and amusing for this gentleman."

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

King Stork

It is unlucky that Herr EMIL LUDWIG'S portrait of Bolivar (W. H. Allen, 17/6) follows hard on the heels of Professor de Madariaga's scholarly prelude to the last act of South American independence. If ever a biography needed notes, bibliography, the whole apparatus of history, the Venezuelan liberator's profuse and incoherent legend is that book. However, Herr Ludwig's "written portrait" of Bolivar has been commissioned by the Venezuelan government; and its hero goes caracoling through page after page of military and political adventure with all the verve of his equestrian statue on the dust-cover. There is no sustained effort to appraise a type that has become a totalitarian commonplace since Bolivar's time, the friend of humanity who shakes off an established order with its abuses, only to find the mob incapable of profiting by its freedom and himself transformed into a dictator. With a singular glimpse of prescience Bolivar foresaw that "Pan-America" was necessary to counter "the Russian colossus, which should be broken to pieces by the whole of On his death-bed he even regretted his revolution and the lost link with Spain. A career and a mentality so kaleidoscopic calls for cautious interpretations and ample facilities for the reader's own exercise of judgment. Neither are here; but the book is an energetic and readable compilation. H. P. E.

An American Critic

The League of Frightened Philistines (ROUTLEDGE, 12/6) contains Mr. James T. Farrell's views on various aspects of American thought and life, and also on a number of modern writers Dreiser, Ernest Hemingway, Mark Twain,

James Joyce and others. The first essay, which gives the book its title, contains a fierce but, at least to an English reader, somewhat incoherent assault on Van Wyck Brooks, Archibald MacLeish, J. Donald Adams, who have apparently been defending civilization, as they conceive it, against Faulkner, Hemingway, Dos Passos and Mr. Farrell himself. Mr. Van Wyck Brooks and his colleagues are, it seems, hostile to "symbolist poets of the past and advanceguard writers of our era who have expressed the doubts, the anguishes, the agonies in the psyche of man," and have been supported in this attitude by "power and the praise of bourgeois Philistines." But the objects of their attack are unperturbed, for they are convinced that "some day there will yet be built a real City of Man." "Get down on your knees, gentlemen," Mr. FARRELL cries, "and pray, pray for an artist who will be like Lloyd C. Douglas, only an artist." Nor is Mr. FARRELL much more illuminating when he deals with particular writers. Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn are "two accusing figures, with their fingers pointing down the decades of American history." Stephen Dedalus "gazes down with melancholy eyes at the turgidly flowing river of time." "The Brothers Karamazov" is "the summation of a lifetime of tortured creative activity."

The Holiday Spirit

It is an odd existence that sustains itself on poisons and antidotes, but when Mr. HARTLEY KEMBALL COOK quotes an editorial headline to the effect that "The All-Round Speeding Up of Life has Converted Holidays from a Luxury to a Necessity" he implicitly dismisses the notion of a return to saner ways. Yet the journeys that were not really necessary seem to have been more enjoyable than our, so to speak, purgative outings, as the accounts of them in Over the Hills and Far Away (ALLEN AND UNWIN, 12/6) testify. Mr. Cook opens with London's Tudor Holy Days and ends "Before the Lights Went Out" in 1914. Although his theme has just been anticipated, his handling has not. He successfully avoids hackneyed authorities and hands out a liberal quota of pages to the walker, whose knapsack of the 'sixties, you learn, included an evening-dress of thin black tweed, laudanum, lucifers and "other minor comforts." The Edwardian resorts are amusingly portrayed, the only notable omission being Pau of the foxhounds. But the author is patriot enough to realize that half the zest of travel lies in the joy of return. There should always be tea and hot-buttered-toast at Dover; and never should tea and hot-buttered-toast be looked for abroad.

J. L. Hodson's Diary

The Way Things Are (VICTOR GOLLANCZ, 12/6) is the eighth instalment of Mr. James Lansdale Hodson's diary, and covers the period from May 1945 to January 1947. There is a certain sameness about the many diaries which, since the beginning of the last war, have been presented for public inspection by much-travelled newspaper correspondents. While one would certainly not wish the writers to be intolerant, misanthropic and morally subversive, one could perhaps spare their tendency to meditate upon the excellence of courage, the value of good humour and cheerfulness, and the desirability of not expecting too much from life. However, the proportion of mellow wisdom in this volume is not higher than one has come to expect, and there is much good reading in it, both amusing and serious. In the latter category, to give two examples from many, is the story of the Norwegian truck-drivers who drove over a precipice, one after the other, with their loads of German soldiers; and a record of a talk the author had with a Master Bomber, who gave a detailed and very vivid account of his work controlling a team of bombers during an airraid over Germany. Among the amusing stories the author tells is one of a duke who was approached by a firm to open its new premises, and agreed, but asked a fee of two thousand guineas and all expenses. Though much taken aback, the firm consented—a curious incident in this century of the common man.

Drag-net of Gloom

The novels of M. Georges Simenon roll on like dingy rivers, charged with all the murkier effluents of the human soul. They have the inevitability and the excitement of the best French films, and, ruthlessly psychological, their revelation of baseness is expressed in action rather than in the clichés of the consulting-room. It is easy to compare SIMENON with Maugham, and their fields are not far apart, but where Maugham finds sardonic humour in the twisted pattern of existence Simenon is a white-coated observer tense at a microscope. Magnet of Doom (ROUTLEDGE, 9/6) describes the life and death of a hunted millionaire, a miser who has made a great fortune in the swamps of Africa and, wanted for murder, prefers a running fight with the French Government to the compromise he could easily buy. In this there is a certain rugged magnificence, though the fight is conducted from holes and corners and ends in the utmost squalor in Panama; and in spite of his meanness the millionaire has an unexpected tenderness which grows on us. Not so his secretary, a youth tied to his master by bonds of greed and hatred only dissolved by cold-blooded The book is mainly about the changing relationship between these two, seen against a background almost terrifying in its ugliness. It is a powerful and remarkable novel, for those with strong stomachs.

Dust and Ashes

Foundations in the Dust (OXFORD, 15/-), by SETON LLOYD, at last brings the specialist subject of Assyriology within reach of the ordinary reader who has an intelligent interest in the almost mythical races which existed in Biblical times. Hitherto we have had to depend on the Bible, on certain writings by T. E. Lawrence, Gertrude Bell and Sir Leonard Woolley (whose "Ur of the Chaldees" did much to popularize this subject), but never before have we been able to see the full story of Mesopotamian exploration within the covers of a single book. Mr. LLOYD has done brilliantly well. Here are myths and fables-the destruction of Babylon, the strange lives in Nineveh, the legendary stories of ancient Assyrian kings—not only proved beyond any doubt but given an importance and reality in relation to the world's early history undreamt of before. Not only does Mr. LLOYD give the biographies of extraordinary men like Rich, Buckingham, and Layard (who were the pioneers of the tremendous discoveries later made), but he also shows the formidable difficulties in human terms, the struggle of men against loneliness, heat, disease, the robberies of the Arabs, wars, plagues, storms-and all with so much insight and sympathy that the result is as fascinating as a novel. From the first explorers of Iraq and Persia, in the early centuries when these regions were as unknown as the Congo, to the colonization by Britain and France, and the discovery of art treasure and oil, the story is tense and complete. Unfortunately, Mr. LLOYD's style-probably

because he is a scientist first and a writer second—is often diffuse. He talks of Claudius Rich as though they were two men when, in actual fact, they were one. Otherwise the book is one of importance and great interest.

R. K.

Every Picture Tells a Story.

Most of us in our youth have been fascinated by some detail in a famous painting—a distant walled city glimpsed over a Madonna's shoulder, perhaps, or some homely incident in a Flemish picture-so that ever after the canvas has remained imprinted on the memory, less for its qualities of colour and design than for some tiny feature which once stirred the imagination. PIETER VAN OOSTKERKE (the pseudonym conceals the identity of a distinguished author and critic) discovered that the best way of interesting his three children in the masterpieces of art was to weave imaginative tales round their subjects; and in The Picture Frame (PETER LUNN, 17/6) he has re-told his bedtime stories about twelve pictures, ranging from the double portrait of the Arnolfinis by Van Eyck in the National Gallery to the Orpenesque little girl in her grandmother's gown by the modern American painter George Bellows. The tales, which will appeal chiefly to parents and their children of fifteen or thereabouts, are enchantingly related —particularly "The Crime of Martin van Nieuwenhoven" (inspired by a Memling diptych), which contains passages reminiscent of Wilde's loveliest fables. Renoir's radiant painting of a young woman "By the Seashore"—which, like the other pictures, is related to its period in an historical note—inspires an ingenious story of Sophie Blanchard who fails to find romance by the seashore of Trouville, but discovers it in a railway compartment on the return journey. Certainly these tales will make a dozen pictures memorable to children; and since young readers should next be encouraged to see the originals to appreciate their painterly qualities, one's only regret is that most of them are housed abroad. The book is beautifully produced, and the colour-blocks faultlessly printed, but one slip calls for correction: Raphael's "St. George and the Dragon" was painted for Duke Guidobaldo, who presented it, not to Henry VIII, but to the reigning monarch, Henry VII.

N. A. D. W.



"You seem to have all the luck with the post, Dad."



"Now who do I see about a seat at the Pilot's table?"

All for Your Delight

T was one of those buildings that house a hundred offices, all different. After reading the walls of the vestibule in vain for some minutes I said to the commissionaire, "I'm looking for a man named Mockstraw."

"First left, first right, knock and enter," I thought he said, though events later proved me wrong; in any case I dared not have asked him to repeat; he had a red face and all the approachability of an alert bullock.

My knock and entry caused only a mild sensation in the small, sparsely-furnished room. One of the two men facing each other in swivel-chairs across the desk waved a monstrous great red pencil in my direction and inserted into a complex sentence the words "Just a mo," while the other, a slight man whose already sallow complexion was highlighted by a bright bow-tie, merely flapped a hand like a slowing motorist.

". . . so it's all very fine you keep

saying it's radio," rushed on the man with the pencil hotly, "as if I didn't know; I was in radio when the studio drapes was Army blankets, and when some people I know was only——"

"All right, all right," interposed the man in the bow-tie. "But it is radio, and what I'm saying it's the mental picture that gets the laughs; it's a question of "—he screwed up his face seeking the exact phrase—"exploiting the medium."

The other man banged his pencil with gentle insistence on a typewriter-ribbon box. "When I was writing for penter." he began

"Keh-h-h-h!" exclaimed the sallow man with disgust, and looked sharply about the floor as if expecting to find a spittoon. "Panto my Aunt Caroline's underskirt! What I keep telling you, panto's visual, ain't it? Where's the mental picture in panto? Who's going to—?"

The man with the pencil was fat,

and now seemed suddenly to feel the heat. He unfastened his waistcoat, tugged his tie loose and allowed himself to relax fully in his chair; it uttered two low creaks as he dropped his hands over its arms and stared at the ceiling.

"Tsshhhhhh!" he said, opening his safety-valve. Then, with peevishness, "All right. Think of something better, that's all."

"And don't think I can't," said his collaborator.

"You do, then, that's all."

The fat man drew his sulky gaze across the ceiling and down the opposite wall until it came to me, sitting on my cheap, straight-backed chair behind the door. He regarded me for a space, musingly, and then seemed to reach a decision. Pushing back his chair with a shriek of castors he crossed the room and stood over me, shooting out an accusing forefinger.

"Do you want the box back?"

He gave the question weight and urgency; so much so that I involuntarily glanced about the room, even in my own lap. There was nothing there but my hat.

"Box?" I said.

"Ha, ha," said the sallow man,

sarcastically.

"Not so fast." The fat man gave an angry little flounce. "Do you want the box back?" he demanded again, clenching his fists on the inflected word.

"I'm sorry," I said-"I'm afraid I

don't quite-

"Do you want the box back?"

"Er-no," I said.

"Ha; ha, ha," said the sallow man, getting out of his chair and coming over. "'No,' he says." He flapped a contemptuous hand at the fat man. "Do you want the box back my Uncle Joe's left-handed moustache-cup!" he exclaimed. Then, to me: "I told him the gag wasn't no dice."

The fat man took some old blottingpaper from the mantelpiece and dabbed

his brow with it.

"It's not a fair test," he said. "Just once or twice isn't any good. Can't tell. Different when we get on the air with a series of twelve broadcasts. Doesn't mean a thing the first time, naturally—'Do you want the box back?' says one of the characters; might raise a titter from the studio audience with a bit of Joey-Joey and a sight gag, but not a sausage from the listener by his own fireside." The man in the bow-tie was moving his head impatiently, preparing to interrupt. "But later in the programme," ran on the fat man, forestalling him, "crops up again, this box, see? 'Do you want the box back?' asks the character studio audience latches on of its own accord this time, even the listener by his own fireside cocks an ear, see, and when we wind up the programme with it-right, it's launched! Now then, when we loose it off again next week, it begins to get properly planted in the public mind. All over the country everybody will-

"Everybody," thrust in the sallow man, assuming a prim, clergyman's smile and speaking shrilly, with exag-gerated noddings, "will be asking each other if they want the box back; errand-boys, milkmen, bus-conductors, Mr. and Mrs. Ordinary Listener, the shop-girls, the office funny-men—all right, all right, ALL RIGHT!" He stood with closed eyes, swaying a little, controlling himself. He groped for the fat man's arm and shook it fiercely, keeping his voice low nevertheless. "But who's asking for an illuminated address on the technique of the radio comedy catch-phrase, thank you very much indeed I'm much obliged I'm

"Sorry," said the fat man, who seemed surprised at the outburst. "I was only-

"What we're after is whether your bit about the box is any good as a catch-phrase or is it not, isn't it?"
"Do you want the box back?"

muttered the fat man to himself. "Do

you want the ?'

"Does it," continued the sallow man, "rank with some of my own established successes? For instance, 'Who's got the port wine?' or, 'Try it sideways, or, 'That's what Mrs. Mason used to say'? We've got to get something

"But you're admitting it," cried the fat man. "Established successes, all those are. Had their chance, made good. But the first time you used Mrs. Mason, now, you wasn't to know she'd eatch? Might have flopped,

might have been-

"Flopped my grannie's little old lace bodice!" exploded the other, swaying his head as if in pain. He snapped his fingers in the air. "You know like that," he asserted. He struck himself several times on the chest. "Something inside here tells you it's right, first time you hear it. My motto for catch-phrases-if it don't click it won't stick. And your box don't click. See what I mean?'

The fat man, dragging his feet,

returned to his chair and slumped down with his head between his hands.

"See what I mean?" said the sallow man, addressing me this time. "What do you think about it?"

All I thought, privately, was that it was time I got out of there. I stood up, preparing some phrase of escape.

I put on my hat.
"Well," I faltered, "I—er—as a matter of fact-

"Yes?" invited the sallow man, his face close to mine.

"I'm looking for a man named Mockstraw," I blurted.

For a second or two nothing happened. Then the sallow face underwent a startling transfiguration. The skin seemed to tighten, the scalp twitched back, the whites of the eyes showed momentarily all round the iris. The mouth opened and closed silently. Then its owner snapped his fingers, pirouetted grotesquely and began to make great sawing gestures with both arms in the direction of the desk.

"Write it down," he muttered at last, trembling violently. "It clicks. It's perfect. I'm looking for a man named Mockstraw. Write it down!"

As I backed to the door the fat man drew a sheet of paper towards him and began to write laboriously, grudgingly, with the red pencil. He had a humped, resigned look, as if he knew his box had gone for good. He would never get it back now. J. B. B.

For Personal Shoppers Only

WAS standing, eight up and six to play, in a fish queue, when the scales, as they so often do, turned against me. The lady at the head of the queue, possessed either of a large appetite or an hotel, got away with every one of the herrings on which I had staked the valuable half-hour I might have spent at home mixing tram tickets into the compost. But the crisis was nothing new in my experience.

I dare say I invite ribaldry when I confess that of all games of chance I find fish queues the most irresistible. Chemin-de-fer will no doubt always have its champions, but for a good sporting bout packed with uncertainty all the way to the tape and bulging with human interest it is the fish queue for me every time. To pin one's money to a particular codling, of exactly the right fin-base to fill out a pie for lunch and yet give satisfaction to dumb retainers, to see it again and again on the verge of being grabbed by the blue-fingered veteran on the business side of the marble, to arrive buffeted and breathless at the head of the queue and to gasp in a voice greasy with triumph: "That young cod with the cast in its left eye!"ah, there is a thrill unknown to Newmarket or Monte Carlo!

Too often, however, I lose. I am a patient shopper, but I like to be told what to buy. Now, not for the first time, I looked wildly round the slab for something I could recognize as

vaguely edible. On a tin tray an enormous brute lay in state, whose face took me straight back to the Nuremberg Trials. Even in death it grinned evilly at the memory of crimes unspeakable at which little fish had quaked in their sandy beds as far as Calais and Le Havre. Beside it was a long pink tubular thing, with tragic eyes set too close together, that I thought had probably been broken in

Pun

GEN

To

lead

and a ch " U Our retu

O. D.

a run on the Dogger Bank. There was also on offer a squadron formating in some parsley of small unpleasing oblong creatures with retractable undercarriages in their necks, and there was a fish the shape of an old boot and covered in scarlet tufts, that was obviously bone from the tail up. In short, wherever I looked I saw anonymous marine monstrosities guaranteed to baffle even such Chablis, mushrooms, butter and cream as might survive in a pagan world.

It was at this terrible moment of frustration and defeat that over the shoulder of the man in front I read the headlines on the filthy scrap of paper he was holding out. "WALKIE-TALKIES FOR THE FLOODS," it said. Suddenly I saw the end of haphazard shopping. And two minutes later I had my name down for three walkie-talkie

sets.

My plan is very simple. You shop as a co-ordinated team. The Controller stays at home with the mother-set round her neck, while the Commando units, each armed with its list, split up on arrival in the target area. Pretty soon one of them calls back:

"This is A for Aberystwyth, very favourably placed in a virgin tripe queue. Estimated time of purchase, ten minutes. Would you care for a short length of bright purple sausage for which there are no takers? Well, we could keep pins in it for a bit. No,

"A for Assmannshausen again. Tripe in hand. Just met the dog-faced man, who reports gin at the stores.

Have I permission to take immediate action? Thank you. Suggest vou divert B for Bimetallism as soon as possible to Hatchet and Mattocks, where the paraffin king is said to be in very good humour . .

A for Amnesia. Gin safely landed. Am now interviewing Mr. Briskett, who wishes to be warmly remembered to you. He says he wouldn't touch this week's beef not even in gloves, but the lamb is a fair treat. Please instruct. Shall I get shoulder, or small leg plus

cutlets?

"A for Alcoholometry. Well, ask me some other time. Am in short queue for quite tolerable-looking cake. But stand by for protest. Have just observed B for Bimetallism and C for Claustrophobia slinking into public of the Knotted Adder holding each other up as if faint. This is the old act, and unless they are recalled to duty directly I shall myself withdraw for a milk-

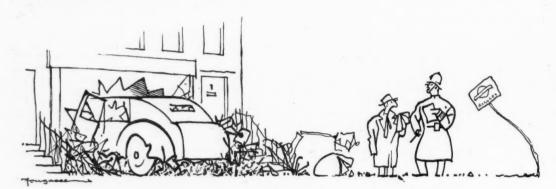
"A for Ahmedpur. He isn't. It's a town in India with manufs. of cotton and silk and a pop. of thirty thousand. Snap decision, please. Shall it be crumpets or doughnuts? . . .

With your intelligence you will readily sense how this innovation turns shopping upside down until it is no trouble at all. The Controller will be able to go on ironing socks, putting toads into holes and fudging her accounts while yet keeping a strategical grip on the whole operation. Once a week will in future be enough. And there is another aspect to the matter. The lives of Controllers cannot be claimed to be madly exciting at the moment. Which of them would not be brighter girls for such a tonic, straight from the field of battle, as:

"A for Aching Auntie Ada. You know that loud woman with the teeth Freddie was feeding with anchovies at the Hoopoe's party? Well, it's just as we suspected, only a thousand times more so. I've run into Charles -never mind where-and he assures me for a fact that-yes, that's it. Isn't it thrilling?"

Reflection

THERE's an old hawthorn tree Bent double over a pool, Forced to see By daylight, by moonlight The bud awaken, The bubble-blossom drown, The leaf turn brown, The berry bird-taken, Green bark grow hornier, Thin fingers thornier and thornier As the seasons change. And every time I pass This still, sad place And see my face Elongated, strange, With ripple-wrinkles hateful, Framed in the savage spikes of grass, It makes me feel extraordinarily grateful That we Can none of us be Born rooted to a looking-glass.

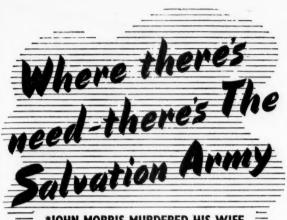


"... being in possession of a stolen vehicle, refusing to stop when called upon to do so by a police officer, driving to the public danger, causing wilful damage to private property, and using motor fuel for the whole or any part of a journey for which the use of public transport is reasonably practicable."

NOTICE.-Contributions or communications requiring an answer should be accompanied by a stamped and addressed Envelope or Wrapper.

The entire copyright in all Articles, Sketches, Drawings, etc., published in PUNCH is specifically reserved to the Proprietors throughout the countries signatory to the BERNE CONVENTION, the U.S.A., and the Argentine. Reproductions or imitations of any of these are therefore expressly forbidden. The Proprietors will, however, always consider any request from authors of literary contributions for permission to reprint.

CONDITIONS OF SALE AND SUPPLY—This periodical is sold subject to the following conditions, namely, that it shall not, without the written consent of the publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of Trade except at the full retail price of 64.: and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out of out or otherwise disposed of our other



*IOHN MORRIS MURDERED HIS WIFE

His young children, friendless and alone, were looked after by The Salvation Army during their father's trial. Since his execution, the children have found in a Salvation Army Home the love and care denied them in the squalor and misery of their early years. They are growing up normal, happy children, soon to take their places as useful citizens.

is fictitious name

GENERAL ALBERT ORSBORN, C.B.E., 101, QUEEN VICTORIA ST., LONDON, E.C.4



To do good work with pencils you need good leadsleads which you can rely on for strength, smoothness and accuracy. The VENUS "War Drawing" gives you a choice of seven such leads. There are also available "Utility" Blacklead, Copying and Coloured pencils. Our famous branded lines of VENUS pencils will return as soon as conditions permit and restrictions are removed.

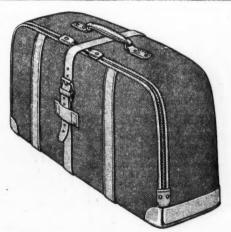
The World's Perfect Quality PENCIL

VENUS PENCIL CO., LIMITED, LOWER CLAPTON ROAD, LONDON, E.5



" Did you ring for your Bovril, Sir?"





duggage for the flir-minded

This double zip fastening suit-case is specially made of light-weight brown canvas bound with grained hide. It is lined with water-proofed material, has two pockets in the lid and is fitted with two inside straps. case — $28'' \times 16\frac{1}{2}'' \times 7''$. Size of £13.18.3

A limited number available in all leather.



for airworthy luggage

17-18 New Bond Street, London, W.I, and at Manchester, Camberley and Truro



You can see new, brilliant whiteness smiling back at you from your mirror after a week of using Pepsodent—after a week of using Pepsodent—and no more effective tooth-cleaning substance is known to dental science. Softly, gently, surely, it emulsifies and washes away the stains and film that hide the pearly whiteness of your smile. It leaves teeth sparkling white—whiter than you can remember seeing them since you were tiny! Use Pepsodent Toothpaste twice a day—see your dentist twice a year.

It's the Irium in Pepaodent toothpaste that gives you sparkling white teeth

Write for the SPRING CATALOGUE

Lowis "First-Class"

FLOWER & VEGETABLE SEEDS

The Lowis Spring Catalogue contains an extensive list of Lowis "First Class" Flower and Vegetable Seeds and a large selection of outstanding species of Gladioli, Montbretia, Dahlias, Early Flowering Chrysanthemums, etc.

A superb production fully illus-

rated with coloured covers.

Send to-day for your copy to:—

LOWIS (SEEDS) LTD., 76 Besten, Lines.

BURMA CHEROOTS



Cigar & Wine Merchants

37 & 38 Royal Exchange, London, E.C.3
We also invite enquiries for
British and Jamaica Cigars.

LETTERS THAT LIVE



Charles Dickens assures a young admirer of Nicholas Nickleby that all shall go well

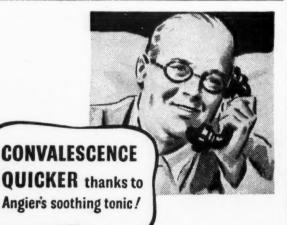
"Respected Sir,—I have given Squeers one cut on the neck and two on the head, at which he appeared much surprised and began to cry, which, being a cowardly thing, is just what I should have expected from him—wouldn't you? ... Nicholas had his roast lamb, but, he could not eat it all, and says if

you do not mind his doing so he should like the rest hashed • tomorrow with some greens, which he is very fond of."

This famous notepaper always the first choice of discriminating people—is well worth seeking, but at the present time, to our regret, is limited in supply.

Basildon Bond

BRITAIN'S MOST DISTINGUISHED NOTEPAPER



For sixty years Angier's Emulsion has been known for the help it gives in recovering from winter ills and chills, including Bronchitis, Coughs, Sore Throats, and Catarrh of the digestive organs. It is soothing to throat and chest, aids sleep and recovery by checking coughing, and gives tone and vitality to the bodily functions, thus hastening recovery and increasing resistance to further infection.

HASTEN CONVALESCENCE WITH

Angier'S EMULSION

THE ANGIER CHEMICAL CO., LTD., 86 CLERKENWELL RD., LONDON, E.C.1



Automatic HEAT IN YOUR HOME

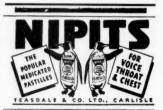
By fitting an Iron Fireman Automatic Coal Stoker to your central heating boiler you can ensure the comfort and convenience of continuous, predetermined heating.

You will welcome, too, the fuel economy effected with even the poorer grades of coal. Ask the makers for details.

Iron Fireman

Automalic Coal Stokers

ASHWELL & NESBIT LIMITED BARKBY ROAD, LEICESTER







The "Midland Employers'," founded in 1898, now has assets exceeding £7,500,000

That half-century of sure growth in a changing world is a testimony of fine service and vision.

The "Midland Employers' "marches ahead of its time, in quest of surer and simpler protection for every insurance need.

Its Golden Jubilee is a spur to fresh achievement. YOU will find the "Midland Employers'" best—

FOR ALL INSURANCES

Low Premiums—Broad Cover—Generous Rebates
Personal Service.

MIDLAND EMPLOYERS'

MUTUAL ASSURANCE LIMITED

Head Office: Waterloo St., Birmingham, 2

35 Offices all over the Kingdom.

Premiums exceed £3,146,800 General Manager: Allan S. Barnfield, O.B.E

To those who are struggling to moderate their smoking, we suggest that the transition can be made smooth and pleasurable by a change to Rothmans Pall Mall de Luxe—a delectable blend, too good for chain smoking.

Rothman of Pall Mall

THE BEST-KNOWN TOBACCONIST
IN THE WORLD

I'm warm and cold, tough & bold young, clean and promising

WHAT AM 1?

The answer is Beetle, the versatile plastic for which new applications are constantly being developed. Beetle is a non-conductor of heat, is tough and resists rough handling. Beetle's hard, clean, glossy surface lends itself to bold design bold colour, bold thought.

Here is the secret — the Beetle resins developed by B.I.P. set by heat or chemical reaction to form an unchanging substance which binds other materials. Hence Beetle's success as a moulding compound, as a plywood bond, as an ingredient of paint, enamels and wet strength paper.

BEETLE BINDS-CAN IT BIND SOMETHING FOR YOU?



BRITISH INDUSTRIAL PLASTICS LTD

I ARGYLL STREET - LONDON - W 1



A range of trucks with a gross rating of 21000-34000 lb.

Engineered for World Markets

LEYLAND MOTORS LIMITED-LEYLAND-LANCS

Pu









John E. Fells & Sons Ltd., London, S.E.I



Norseman Raincoats

discriminating people

NORSEMAN braves all weathers

Made by: A. B. Hargreaves & Co. Ltd. Chorley, Lancs.



bor sterling quality



THE HALL MARK OF STERLING QUALITY IN MUTUAL LIFE ASSURANCE

SCOTTISH WIDOWS' FUND

Head Office: 9 St. Andrew Square, Edinburgh, 2 London Offices:

28 Cornhill, E.C.3. 17 Waterloo Place, S.W.1



ALWAYS PLEASE



They're not playthings for a day, they're made to give endless pleasure. There's a big variety of Tri-ang Toys all beautifully finished in gay colours and most inexpensive. Ask to see them in your local toy shop, we do not supply direct.

LINES BROS. LTD. LONDON S.W.19.

A GOOD TURN

To those to whom it is second nature to do a good turn, the Church Army appeals on behalf of men, women and children needing a new start in life. The task of turning sadness into gladness is indeed a happy one—will YOU take a turn? Please send a gift to The Rev. Prebendary Hubert H. Treacher, Church Army, 55, Bryanston St., London, W.I.





SHOPPING THROUGH THE AGES

No such thing as Early Closing!

In an age that we like to think of as more leisurely and gracious than our own, when shopping was not regulated by the minute-hand of the clock, the shopkceper and his customer met in a friendly relationship that sometimes lasted a lifetime. Different times demand different working conditions, but the value of the personal touch is still unchanged. A distinctive part of W. H. Smith & Son's service is the close personal attention that is given to every customer, and this, no doubt, accounts to a large extent for the popularity of the Firm's many branches.

NEWSAGENTS · BOOKSELLERS · STATIONERS · BOOKBINDERS PRINTERS · ADVERTISING AGENTS · LENDING LIBRARY

1500 BOOKSHOPS AND BOOKSTALLS Head Office: W. H. Smith & Son, Ltd., Strand House, Portugal St., London, W.C.2



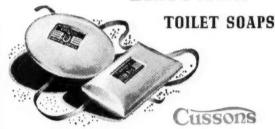
The qualities most sought

by connoisseurs of soap

find their

happiest combination in

IMPERIAL LEATHER



Cussons Sons & Co. Ltd. 84 Brook Street, Grosvenor Square, London, W.1





Mmm! That . . .



must be . .



that . .



can only be . . .



ves . . .



it is . . .





ABDULL... A(b)!



No. 7 'Virginia' Cigarettes 20 for 3/8

ALSO Abdulla Turkish and Egyptian

After a good day's work for Britain



-that's when beer is best

